

In this issue...
NEW Ray Bradbury

#6

\$1.25

STAR REACH

MICHAEL
MOORCOCK'S
ELRIC





27 September 1976
Hayward, CA

It would be hard to restrain my enthusiasm for this issue of STAR*REACH, even if I wanted to do so. Less than two months ago I literally had no idea what was going to be in this issue beyond the second chapter of "Gods of Mount Olympus" and the short, cute "Childsong" feature. A number of projects by a variety of people were in the works, but none of them appeared to be nearing any state of completion. Then in the space of one week three bombshells (if you will) descended upon me. In chronological order:

First, I was attending the San Diego Comics Convention in late July. I heard the grand master Ray Bradbury read from his mind and heart and soul regarding the then week-old Viking-I landing on Mars. He struck chords within me. Minutes later, brought together again by Shel Dorf, Ray surprisingly presented me his poetic work for first publication in these pages. (And before I forget, for this and your past favors and courtesies, THANKS, SHEL!) And minutes after that, the man with one of the most fantastic imaginations in our field, Alex Nino, agreed to illustrate Ray's poem. These events alone were enough to get me high.

But a couple more surprises awaited. When I returned here from San Diego, in my stack of mail was one of those "discouraged", unsolicited submissions, "Out of Space, Out of Time", from one Gray Lyda of Salt Lake City. Only this one knocked me out. It has weaknesses: panel composition needs to be improved and he made a couple of technical errors which we corrected, but there is a strong sensitivity in his artwork that overcomes these shortcomings and the storyline is a real sneaker; you better read it twice (it wasn't till the third reading for me that many of the ramifications of his story sank in.)

And then, in perhaps the biggest surprise of all, in the mail the next following day, forwarded by artist Barry Smith, was this issue's lead story by Bob Gould and Eric Kimball. "Elic" has always been a favorite prose character of mine. Fantasist/author Michael Moorcock created a character who is entertaining to read on the escapist fun-and-games level but upon reflection is also dealing with internal forces ("order" and "chaos"; "law" and "anarchy") that have a "real life" application. Multi-level entertainment is the kind that excites me the most; I jumped at the chance to bring this particular character once again into comics. It turned out that Steve Grant in Madison, Wisconsin, had originally started this project off, intending to publish it himself. It bounced here and there and finally to STAR*REACH. I have to thank Steve Grant and Michael Moorcock for their cooperation, Barry Smith for providing the connections and Jeff Jones, the superb book-cover painter, for granting permission to print his cover on much less favorable terms than is his norm (and his due, outside the disproportionately small finances of the comic book world). Not to mention Gould and Kimball, who did such a beautiful job of bringing Moorcock's character into visual form.

Now perhaps you can see why I'm enthusiastic. This issue represents for me a distinct step forward toward that elusive "unique statement", a comic that reflects my own editorial tastes, that stands out apart from the work of other editors and publishers. A case can be made that this issue represents no more than my coincidental good fortune in having these stories drop in my lap unsolicited. But I'd rather believe that after these long few years enough energy has been put into this magazine that it's developing its own gravity center and is beginning to draw good comics material to it. Or, in another fashion, it's now rolling downhill on its own power. And I'm certainly not going to stop it — in fact I'm going to enjoy the ride. Hope you join me.

Before I go, Bob Gould and Eric Kimball are a company unto themselves, "Two-Man-Horse". They ask that I tell you that if you send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to them at 162 Walnut, Brookline, MA 02146, they'll mail you an illustrated brochure of their items in print, as well as a listing of current projects. Says Bob, "Immediately at press are an Elic portfolio and four new Elic prints, as well as a very large print concerning the death of King Arthur."

And finally, I want to renew my requests for any letters of comment you care to send. Take care. See you next time.

Nike Friedrich

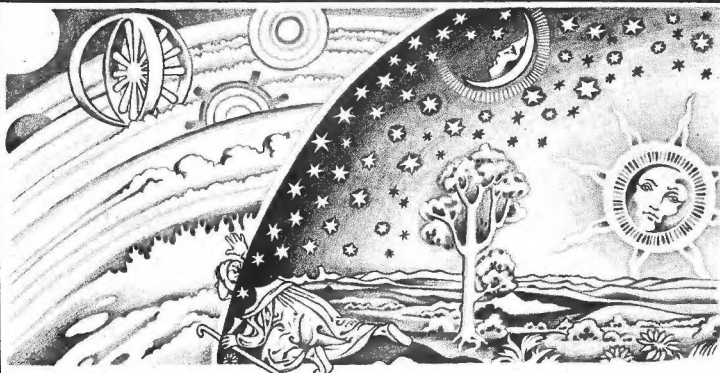
STAR*REACH #6 is published by Star*Reach Productions, P.O. Box 385, Hayward, CA 94543; Mike Friedrich, editor and publisher. ©1976 Star*Reach Productions. World Rights Reserved. Cover Art ©1976 Jeff Jones. The character "Elic" © Michael Moorcock. "Prisoner of Pan Tang" ©1976 Two-Man-Horse (Eric Kimball and Robert Gould). "Childsong" ©1976 Gary Petrus, Gene Day and Steve Lelaloha. The poem "Why Viking-Lander Mars?" ©1976 Ray Bradbury. The accompanying illustration to this poem ©1976 Alex Nino. "Gods of Mount Olympus, Chapter Two" ©1976 Johnny Achziger and Joe Staton. "Out of Space, Out of Time" ©1976 Gray Lyda. Address all inquiries c/o Star*Reach Productions.

Contributions are not encouraged, though eventually read; warnings: no return postage and it'll be trashed.

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Out of SPACE ● Out of TIME

THE FLUIDANS NOTICED THE
NEW FORM SHIMMERING
ABOVE THE DOMAIN.



THEY APPROACHED,
WRITHING WITH A THOUSAND
COLORS AND A HUNDRED
SENSES.

THERE WAS A DUTY TO PERFORM--
AN OBLIGATION TO BE FULFILLED.

QUESTIONING TENDRILS OF
CONSCIOUSNESS ENTERED
THE BEING'S MENDRY,
TRANSLATING ALIEN CONCEPTS
INTO FAMILIARITY,
LISTENING AS THE "NEW ONE"
BEGAN ITS TALE...

"I WAS A WOMAN--THAT IS, A
FEMALE MEMBER OF THE RACE
CALLED 'MANKIND,' 'HOMO SAPIENS,'
'HUMANITY,' 'TERRAN.' 'FOOL.' I
WAS A WOMAN, AND WHATEVER
I AM NOW, I OWE TO THE MIS-
GUIDED AMBITION OF OUR
RACE OF FOOLS. LISTEN..."



"IT WAS 2020 A.D. CUNNINGLY
REFERRED TO AS THE 'YEAR
OF PERFECT VISION,' IMPLYING
A WRY PUN AS WELL AS A
MOTTO OF HOPE.
THE 'MOIRA-QUEST' ORBITED
COMPLETE, CIRCLING THE
MOON, A SYMBOL OF THE
RACE'S UNITY AND DESTINY..."



"THE FIRST STARSHIP BORN TO AN
AWAKENING CIVILIZATION.

"CARRYING FIVE WOMEN AND THREE
MEN, THE CRAFT WOULD CHALLENGE
INFINITY IN SEARCH OF OTHER WORLDS
SCATTERED AMONG OTHER SUNS.
EIGHT FOOLS FOLLOWING THE VISION OF
A MYOPIC RACE. HOW BLIND THEY WERE,
WE COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN..."



"THEY LIGHTED THE SKY ABOVE AN ENTIRE CONTINENT TO BID US FAREWELL. OUR ENGINES FUSED HELIUM TO HYDROGEN, AND THE MOIRA-QUEST BEGAN THE FIRST SMALL STEP OF A JOURNEY THAT WOULD SPAN DECADES.

"WE WATCHED EARTH SHRINK INTO AN INNOCUOUS POINT OF LIGHT, ITS GLOWING NIGHTSIDE MESSAGE FADING WITH THE DISTANCE.

"IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE WE HAD ONLY A WANING BLUE STAR TO KNOW AS 'HOME'."



ALL RIGHT, MATES-- LET'S GET THIS SHIP STARBOUND!

SOL-3
MXMG
2000X

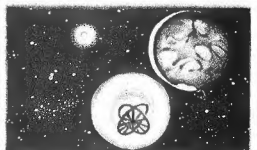
DO YOU SEE?
THEY'VE
EXTINGUISHED
THE SKYLIGHT.
WE ARE
BANISHED TO
THE FUTURE,
TO DIE
IN THEIR
MEMORIES.



NO NEED FOR TEARS,
MY LOVE -- A
NEW HOME AWAITS.



PERHAPS I HAVE
KNOWN THIS HOME
FOR TOO LONG.



"OUR PINPOINT BIRTHPLACE BECAME LOST IN THE SKY, AND THE SUN BEGAN TO DIMINISH WITH IT. SOON, WHAT WOULD THERE BE BUT STARS?"

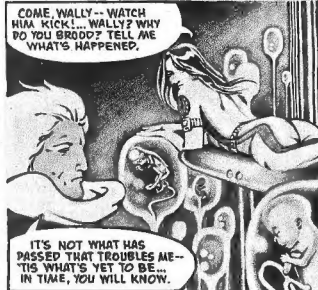
"IT WAS THE DUTY, THE HONOR, THE INTENTION AND THE CONSTANT PREOCCUPATION OF THE SHIP'S COMPANY TO PROCREATE. IN THE YEARS TO COME, THE MOIRA-QUEST WOULD TEEM WITH HUMAN LIFE -- A NEW RACE BORN TO ZERO-G, FREE FROM THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD. I WAS CAPTAIN WALSH PEREGRINE'S 'FIRST MATE', AND FROM US WOULD GROW THE WISE LEADERS OF AN INTERSTELLAR NATION..."

OUR CHILDREN WILL
INHERIT THE STARS!



"I CONCEIVED OUR FIRST SON AS WE HURTLÉ THROUGH THE ASTEROID BELT."

COME, WALLY -- WATCH
HIM KICK!... WALLY? WHY
DO YOU GROGG? TELL ME
WHAT'S HAPPENED.



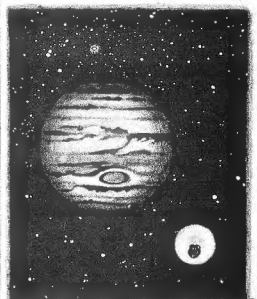
IT'S NOT WHAT HAS
PASSED THAT TROUBLES ME--
IT'S WHAT'S YET TO BE
IN TIME, YOU WILL KNOW.

"EARTH WAS GONE
FROM VIEW. THE SUN
COULD BE OVERLOOKED
AS JUST ANOTHER
BRIGHT SPECK IN AN
INDIFFERENT VOID.

WE SWUNG NEAR TO THE MADDENING
ENORMITY OF
JUPITER, LETTING
HER GRAVITY HURL
US ONWARD AND
OUTWARD.

AND GRADUALLY,
WALLY BECAME
STRANGE AND SULEN,
AS REMOTE TO ME AS
THE DWINDLING SUN.

I WONDERED IF HIS
STABILITY WAS
WAVERING -- I HAD TO
REMINI MYSELF THAT
HE WAS ACTUALLY AN
OLD MAN -- VERY OLD.





"WALLY'S AGE AND SANITY BECAME MORE QUESTIONABLE AS OUR VOYAGE PROGRESSED.

MUCH OF HIS FREE TIME WAS SPENT PAINTING AN ANCIENT, NAMELESS WOODCUT, HIS MOST CHERISHED POSSESSION.

AND FOR THAT, I GREW JEALOUS.

BY THE TIME WE CROSSED SATURN'S PATH, A CONFRONTATION WAS DUE..."



"THIS PICTURE'S LOVELY, WALLY, BUT DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE PAINTED IT? THIS WAS A PRICELESS ORIGINAL."



"I WAS MERELY COMPLETING THE PROJECT... AS I HAD INTENDED SINCE FIRST I CUT THE WOOD."

"SINCE YOU--? YOU CREATED THIS? BUT IT'S CENTURIES OLD!"

"YES... I WAS BUT A CHILD AT THE TIME."



"IT SEEMED I HAD BROACHED A GREAT MYSTERY, AND FROM THAT POINT FORWARD I WAS AN AVID LISTENER OF HIS RAYINGS AND REVELATIONS."



"THE STARS ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM. THERE IS MUCH THAT ELUDES MAN'S UNDERSTANDING."

"AGREED... BUT AS A WOMAN, I DEMAND TO UNDERSTAND."

"DEMAND." I, TOO, DEMANDED... ONCE. IT IS A WELL-SPelled WORD, FOR IT HOLDS THE SAME LETTERS AS "DAMNED..."



"HE TOYED WITH MY CURIOSITY UNTIL I LUSTED FOR THE TRUTHS THAT LAY BEYOND THE SCOPE OF HUMAN THOUGHT."

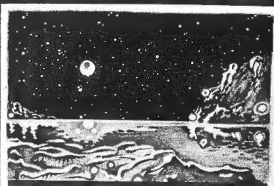
"THEN CAME HIS QUESTION..."

"OR WAS IT A THREAT?"



"WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR SOUL TO KNOW THE TRUTH? YOUR VERY SOUL?"

"YES. I WOULD GIVE IT UP WITHOUT HESITATION."



"SO BE IT," HE MURNERED AS THE FROZEN WASTE OF PLUTO PASSED BELOW. THE LAST FRAGMENT OF OUR ORIGINS DARTED AWAY, AND THE ADIRA QUEST RACED TO THE LIMITS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM."

"WE COASTED LEISURELY THROUGH THE DISTANT REGIONS OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM, SOON TO ACTIVATE THE DRIVES THAT WOULD BRING US AS CLOSE TO LIGHTSPEED AS POSSIBLE. ZERO-GEE AND A SENSE OF SUCCESS CONTRIBUTED TO OUR LIGHT-HEADEDNESS AS WE ASSEMBLED ON THE OBSERVATION DECK..."

"SUDDENLY, WALLY STRUCK LIKE A WASP-- IN THE SPACE OF FIVE SECONDS, HE HAD DEFTLY SLIT EVERYONE'S THROATS..."

"...EVERYONE'S SAVE MINE..."

"I WAS TRAPPED IN A METAL TOMB WITH A CAPTAIN WHO HAD GONE MAD."

I HAVE DISENGAGED THEIR CAROTID ARTERIES. DEATH WAS INSTANT, PAIN NEGLIGIBLE. AT THIS MOMENT THEIR SOULS ARE RETURNING TO EARTH, ESCAPING AN UNKNOWN FATE THAT IS BEYOND THEIR COMPREHENSION.

BUT YOU... YOU HAVE OPTED TO GO ON...

"I STARED AT THEM DRIFTING IN THE AIR, GENTLY BUMPING AGAINST EACH OTHER, GENTLY BOUNCING AWAY, THEIR EYES WIDE WITH ASTONISHMENT, MOUTHS HALF-OPEN WITH SILENT CURSES... AND ALL AROUND THEM BROILED AN EVER-THICKENING RED MIST."

BUT WALLY... WHAT OF THE CHILDREN?

THEY'RE NOT WORTH THE PROTOPLASM THEY'RE PRINTED ON. HUMANS CAN ONLY BE CONCERNED ON YOUR HOME PLANET... THEY'LL LEARN THAT SOON ENOUGH.

BUT THERE IS NO TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS. SOON WE WILL BE BEYOND ALL CHOICES. YOU MUST DECIDE NOW: FORFEIT YOUR SOUL AND GO ON TO LEARN THE TRUTH...

"...OR JOIN THE OTHER SOULS ON THEIR RETURN TO EARTH."



"WALLY TOLD ME THAT THE STARS AS I HAD KNOWN THEM WERE NOTHING BUT A NAIVE MYTH. BUT WHO HAD STARTED THE MYTH? HE'D SAID HE WAS A CHILD WHEN HE CREATED THE ANCIENT WOODCUT... BUT HOW OLD A CHILD? TEN? TWENTY? A HUNDRED? A THOUSAND? THE MOIRA-QUEST HAD ALSO BEEN WALLY'S CREATION. NOW GREAT HAD HIS INFLUENCE BEEN BEFORE THAT?"

"TOO MANY QUESTIONS, NO TIME TO ASK THEM. I HAD TO ACT."



"I WAS PART OF A FANTASTIC MYTH-- BUT THE MYTH WORKED--"

"--AND I WOULD NOT BE ME WITHOUT IT."



"I CHOSE TO RETAIN MY IDENTITY."

"I WOULD STAY WHERE I BELONGED-- BACK ON EARTH!"



"I'M SORRY, YOUR SOUL WILL NOT BE RELEASED SOON ENOUGH..."

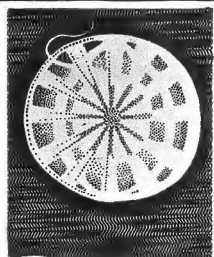


"...WE'RE GOING THROUGH!"

"MY HEART POUNDED ITSELF TO DEATH AGAINST THE COLD BLADE OF MY KNIFE. BUT--"

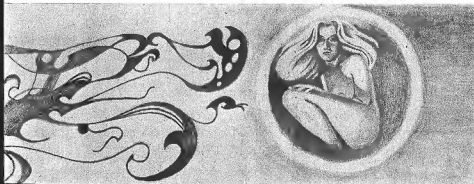
"I 'SAW' FOR MY BRAIN--SO DISTANT FROM MY HEART--WAS YET ALIVE, THE LAST ORGAN TO SUCCUMB..."

"I 'SAW' AS MY BODY VANISHED, AND MY THOUGHTS WERE CARRIED THROUGH, UNDEAD, INTO ANOTHER REALM."



"THE SHIP WAS TORN INTO MOLECULAR RUBBLE AS WE BROKE THROUGH THE PROTECTIVE VEIL OF MY STELLAR SYSTEM."

"THE JOURNEY OF THE MOIRA-QUEST WAS ENDED, BUT ITS IMAGE LINGERED, RELUCTANT TO GIVE UP THE ILLUSION. PERHAPS MEMBERS OF MY EARTHBOUND RACE COULD SIGHT A BRIEF NOVA IN A FALSE SKY, AND KNOW THAT THEIR STARSHIP HAD FAILED.

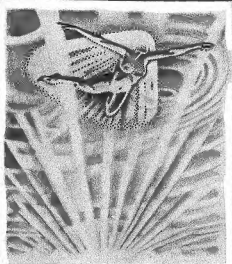


"AND SO MY JOURNEY BEGAN. MY THOUGHTS SEEMED TO HAVE VOLUME, AND THEY FILLED A NEW SPACE, A NEW PRESENCE I COULD CALL MY 'SELF'.

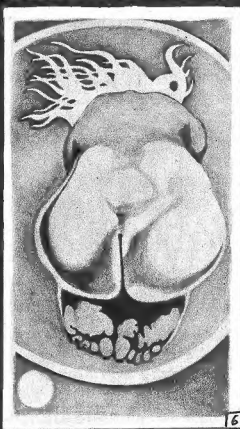
"WHATEVER I MIGHT BE, I AM AWARE AND THEREFORE I MUST ASSUME THAT I INDEED EXIST.




"WITH THIS FRESH EXISTENCE, I EXPERIENCED FREEDOM I HAD NEVER BEFORE IMAGINED, AND KNEW SENSATIONS THAT MY RACE COULD NEVER EXPECT. I FELT THAT I UNDERSTOOD ALL THAT MATTERED... THE UNIVERSE WAS A PLACE OF EXCRUCIATING JOY, AND I HAD WASTED MY LIFE BY BEING GRIM AND NARROW. WE WERE AS ONE, ETERNITY, INFINITY, AND I.



"I EXHALED IN MY PRECIOUS, BOUNDLESS FREEDOM... BUT, AS WITH ALL THINGS, THIS TOO REACHED AN END..."






MY AWARENESS FALTERED FOR EONS OR SECONDS, I KNOW NOT WHICH... THEN I FOUND MYSELF **HERE**, IN YET **ANOTHER** MYSTERY. I HAVE GONE BEYOND THE UNIVERSE OF MANKIND, AND **STILL** I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I HAVE GIVEN UP MY SOUL, YET TRUTH **STILL** ELUDES ME. WALLY, IT SEEMS, HAD LIED TO ME AS HE'D LIED TO **ALL** OF MY RACE.

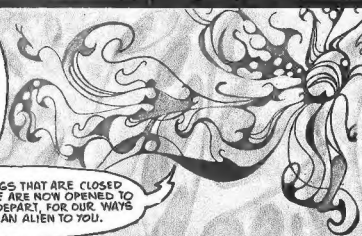
IT WAS NOT YOUR FREE CHOICE. I SHOULD HAVE MADE YOUR DEATH MORE SWIFT. I APOLOGIZE.

"WE"? "I"? WHO ARE YOU?




WE ARE THE TRUE FORM OF THE BEING YOU KNEW AS CAPTAIN WALSH PEREGRINE. I AM SORRY THAT I SEEM SINISTER TO YOU, BUT AGAIN THE BLAME IS MINE. WHAT I DID ON EARTH WAS NECESSARY, IF ONLY FOR MYSELF.

I HAVE AFFECTED THE LIVES OF MANY TO ESCAPE THE MADNESS OF YOUR RACE, IN WHICH I WAS TRAPPED-- AND PERHAPS I BECAME, IN PART, RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT MADNESS.

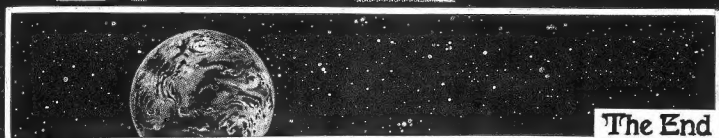
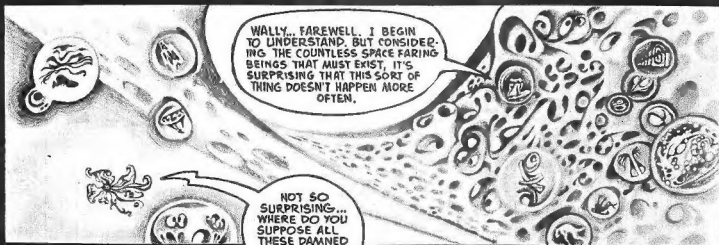


BUT I AM ALIVE, AND LIFE PURSUES SURVIVAL AND FREEDOM WITH WHATEVER ABILITIES IT CAN SUMMON. I AM ALIVE, YOU ARE THE SAME. CHERISH THIS, FOR IT IS ULTIMATELY THE ONLY THING OF VALUE.

THOSE THINGS THAT ARE CLOSED TO YOUR RACE ARE NOW OPENED TO YOU. I MUST DEPART, FOR OUR WAYS ARE MORE THAN ALIEN TO YOU.

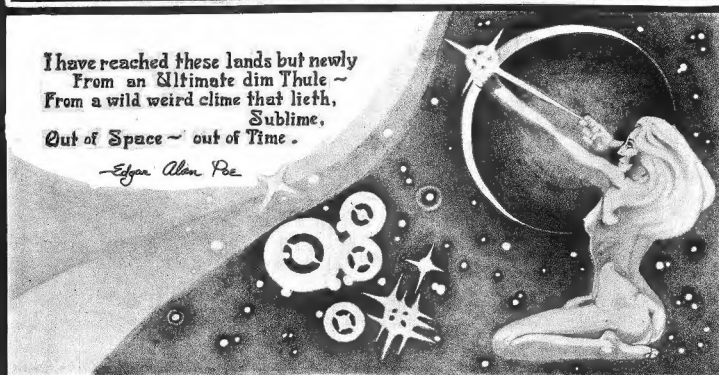


FAREWELL... GO AND FIND YOUR TRUTH. THEN DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH IT. NO NEED FOR TEARS, M'LOVE... A NEW UNIVERSE AWAITS.



I have reached these lands but newly
From an Ultimate dim Thule ~
From a wild weird clime that lieth,
Sublime,
Out of Space ~ out of Time .

Edgar Allan Poe



Childsong

© Copyright 1976
Gary Petras, script
Gene Day, artwork
Steve Laialoha, inks

Peace reigns.

They are gone. Gone away with
the sickness and hate they
carried within them.

Tom Orzechowski, letters

The child is alone...
alone among those who
would never dream
of hurting him.



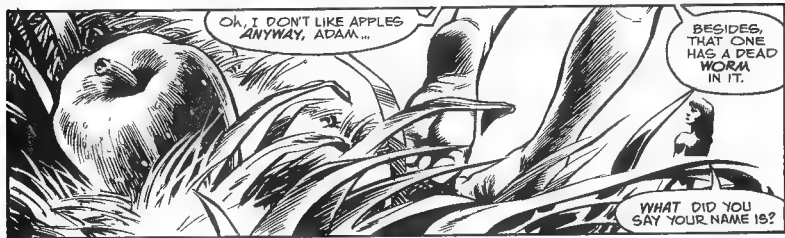
The child does not understand what has happened. The world his parents knew has been
destroyed. His world lies before him.



Yet his world is beautiful.







Why Viking-Lander / Mars?

By Ray Bradbury ©1976

Why Mars?

Why go to find the place?

The human race gives answer, finds a pause,

And, no, not just because it's there.

We walk the air from here to planet out beyond

Because we're more than fond of life and what we are.

And what is that? you ask.

For answer, go to Shaw,

Dear G. B. S. speaks constantly,

Asks Why and What are we?

The Life Force in the Universe

That longs to See!

That would Become

And in the act of being, changing, seeing, touching, growing

Rouse up as beast that knows itself

And knows it knows and keeps on knowing.

We are the Abyss Light that comes from Pleides

The stuff that, born in dark,

Now sees and knows it sees.

A mute flesh lately found and given tongue

To sing strange songs that till our time remained unsung.

And what the song, the tune?

To fashion fires and thus outrace the Moon

And with our new flame-tossing Ra-Egyptian chariot cars

Fly off to land, taste, touch, and know strange Mars.

And with the knowledge gained making lasting yeast

To grow man ten ways tall to feast

On universe and stars,

And use as seedbed station-birthing place

This empty Mars.

Again: what is this perturbed flesh, dissatisfied

That long to try and test what none have tried?

Why: Force and Matter, changed to Thought and Will

That Thought which dreams of flight in fire

To stand us Kings on Martian hill.

We Lazarus call ourselves from earthly tomb

And go to find a better place, a larger room.

Mars but a beginning,

Real Heaven our end,

That is the power man has to build and send

To answer Job's most rank despair and old outcry:

Man need not fade and fall and, falling, die!

Why Mars? Why Viking-Lander on its way?

To landfall Time, give man Forever's Day . . .

Unlock the doors of light-year grave

Fling wide the portal

Give man the gift of stars,

Grow him immortal.

Put down the Dark, kill final Death,

And sweeten Man with everlasting breath.





ZEUS AND PROMETHEUS

CHAPTER TWO

ADAPTED BY JOHANNY ACHZIGER

ART BY JOE STANTON

©1976

GODS OF MOUNT OLYMPUS IN ANCIENT MYTHOLOGY





WHEN ENOUGH MEN WERE CREATED THEY WERE SENT FORTH TO RULE THE EARTH.

MAN SOON GREW BOLD! THEY ARGUED EVEN WITH ZEUS OVER WHICH PORTION OF A BULL SHOULD BE BURNED IN SACRIFICE TO THE GODS.

NATURALLY ALL THE BEST PARTS SHOULD BE OFFERED TO THE GODS!

BUT, LORD, WHAT WOULD BE LEFT FOR US TO EAT?

BECAUSE OF HIS WISDOM AND HIS LOVE FOR MAN, PROMETHEUS WAS CALLED UPON TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE.

I SHALL DIVIDE THE BULL INTO TWO SECTIONS AND ALLOW OUR LORD, ZEUS, TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEM!



WEEKING TO AID MAN, PROMETHEUS HID THE GOOD MEAT BENEATH A COVERING OF ENTRAILS...



THE OTHER PILE CONTAINED ALL THE BONES COVERED WITH A RICH LAYER OF FAT.



ZEUS CHOSE THE MORE TEMPTING PILE...

...**A**ND WAS OUTRAGED WHEN THE TRICKERY WAS DISCOVERED!



NO LONGER SHALL MAN HAVE **FIRE** TO COOK HIS MEALS / LET THEM EAT THEIR FLESH **RAW!**



BUT PROMETHEUS WOULD NOT LET HIS BELOVED CHILDREN SUFFER.

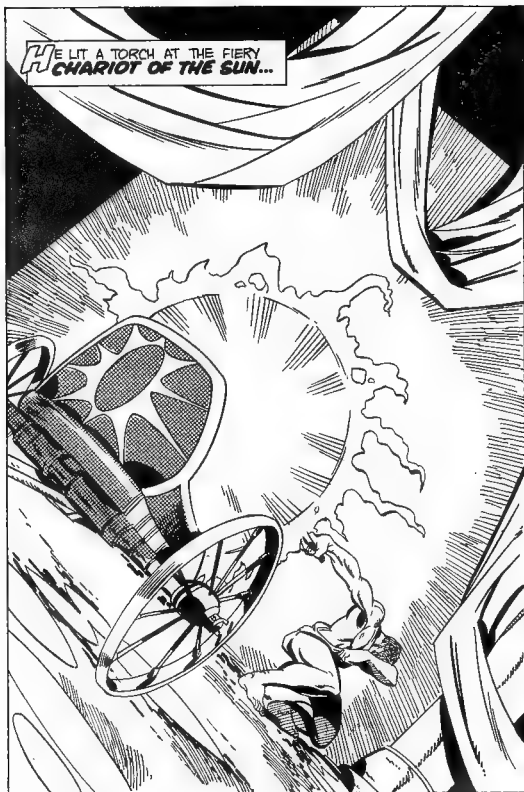
WISE ATHENA, I NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE TO GAIN ADMITTANCE TO **OLYMPUS**... WITHOUT THE OTHER GODS KNOWING OF MY PRESENCE!



PPROMETHEUS WAS SOON IN THE DOMAIN OF THE GODS!



HE LIT A TORCH AT THE FIERY CHARIOT OF THE SUN...



...**A**ND CONCEALED IT UNTIL HE WAS ONCE AGAIN UPON THE EARTH.







ALL THE GODDESSES WERE CALLED UPON TO ENDOW THE NEW CREATURE WITH SPECIAL CHARMS TO MAKE HER MOST ATTRACTIVE.

HER NAME SHALL BE **PANDORA!**



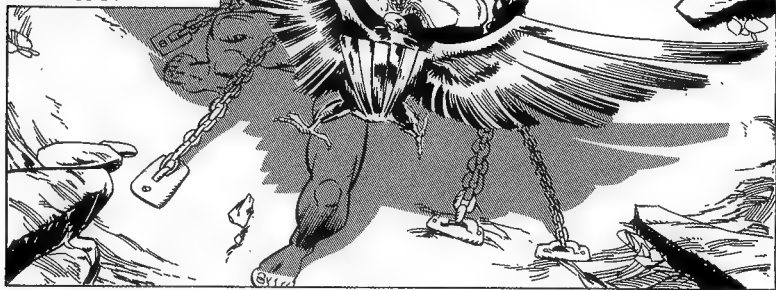
I BRING A **GIFT** FROM THE MIGHTY ZEUS TO HIS GREAT FRIEND PROMETHEUS!



I KNOW VERY WELL THAT NOTHING GOOD WOULD COME TO ME FROM THE GODS. GO BACK, HERMES, AND TELL ZEUS I **REJECT** HIS GIFT!

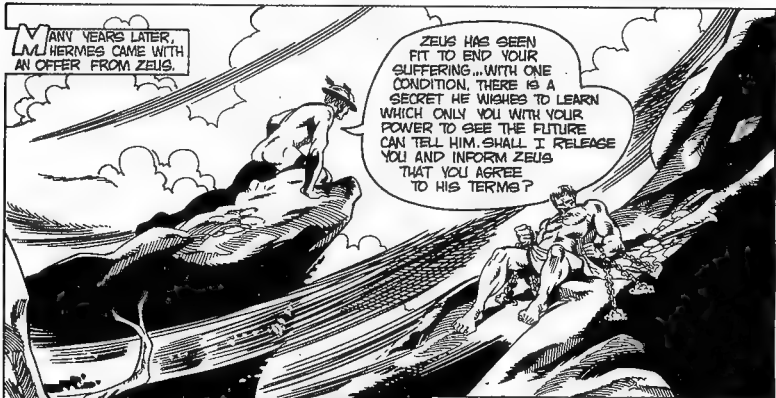


EACH DAY A VORACIOUS VULTURE FED UPON PROMETHEUS' LIVER. EACH FREEZING NIGHT, THE LIVER GREW BACK, EVEN THE COURAGEOUS PROMETHEUS COULD NOT HOLD BACK HIS PITIFUL OUTCRIES.



MANY YEARS LATER, HERMES CAME WITH AN OFFER FROM ZEUS.

ZEUS HAS SEEN FIT TO END YOUR SUFFERING...WITH ONE CONDITION, THERE IS A SECRET HE WISHES TO LEARN WHICH ONLY YOU WITH YOUR POWER TO SEE THE FUTURE CAN TELL HIM. SHALL I RELEASE YOU AND INFORM ZEUS THAT YOU AGREE TO HIS TERMS?



PROMETHEUS' BROTHER,
EPIMETHEUS, ACCEPTED
PANDORA WITH JOY.



... UNTIL, ONE DAY, HERMES APPEARED TO THEM.





YOU GO AHEAD...I'LL
JOIN YOU IN A
MOMENT.



I'LL JUST UNTIE THIS
STRANGE KNOT... I WON'T
LOOK INSIDE.



PLEASE GET
US OUT...

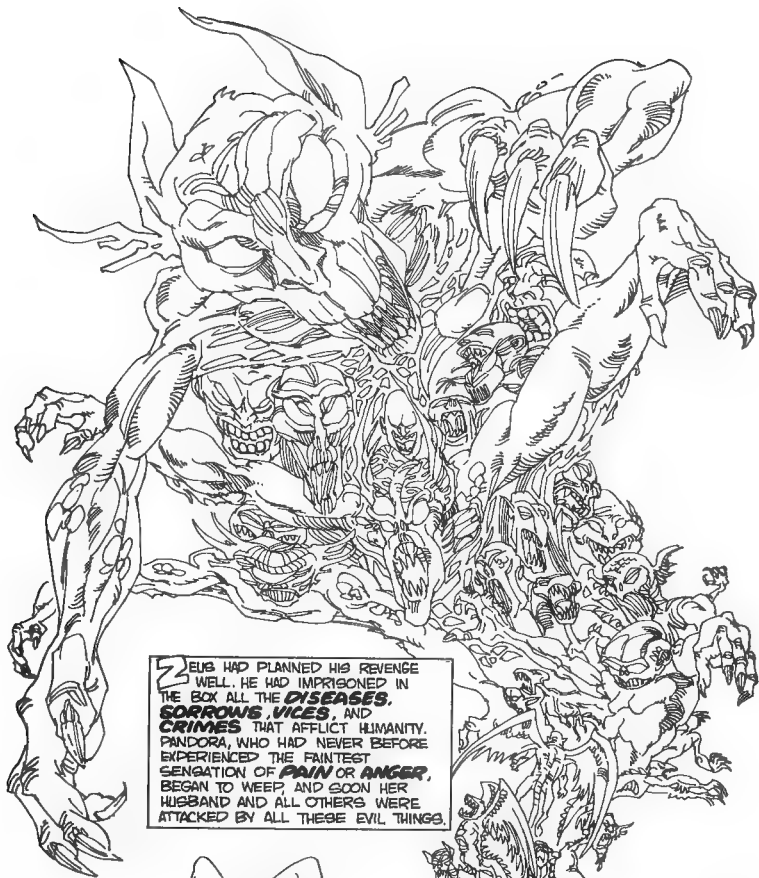


A QUICK LOOK
WON'T HURT
ANYTHING...



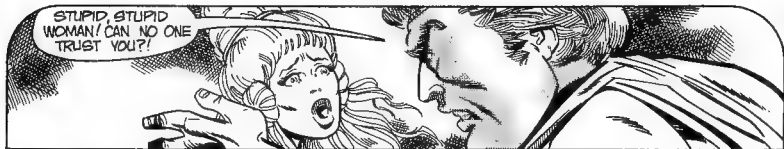
OH....



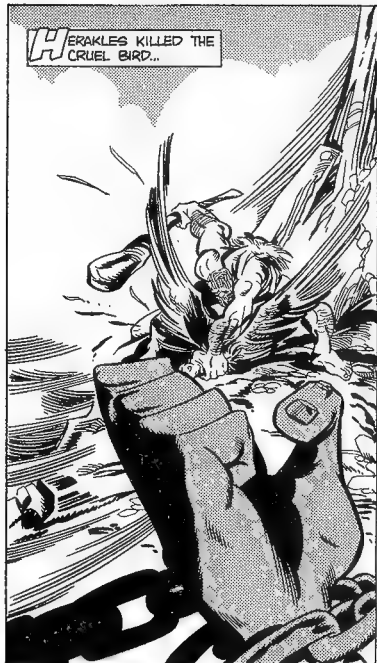


ZELUS HAD PLANNED HIS REVENGE WELL. HE HAD IMPRISONED IN THE BOX ALL THE **DISEASES, SORROWS, VICES, AND CRIMES** THAT AFFLICT HUMANITY. PANDORA, WHO HAD NEVER BEFORE EXPERIENCED THE FAINTEST SENSATION OF **PAIN OR ANGER**, BEGAN TO WEEP, AND SOON HER HUSBAND AND ALL OTHERS WERE ATTACKED BY ALL THESE EVIL THINGS.





HERAKLES KILLED THE
CRUEL BIRD...



...AND FREED THE
LONG-SUFFERING
PROMETHEUS. IN
GRATITUDE, PROMETHEUS
ANSWERED A QUESTION
PUT TO HIM BY HERAKLES.



GENERATION AFTER GENERATION OF MEN
LIVED AND DIED ON EARTH, BLESSING
PROMETHEUS FOR THE GIFT HE HAD OBTAINED
FOR THEM AT SUCH A TERRIBLE COST. HE
HAD REFUSED TO SUBMIT TO ZEUS' CRUELTY
AND TYRANNY...AND THOUGH HIS BODY WAS
BOUND, HIS SPIRIT WAS FREE!



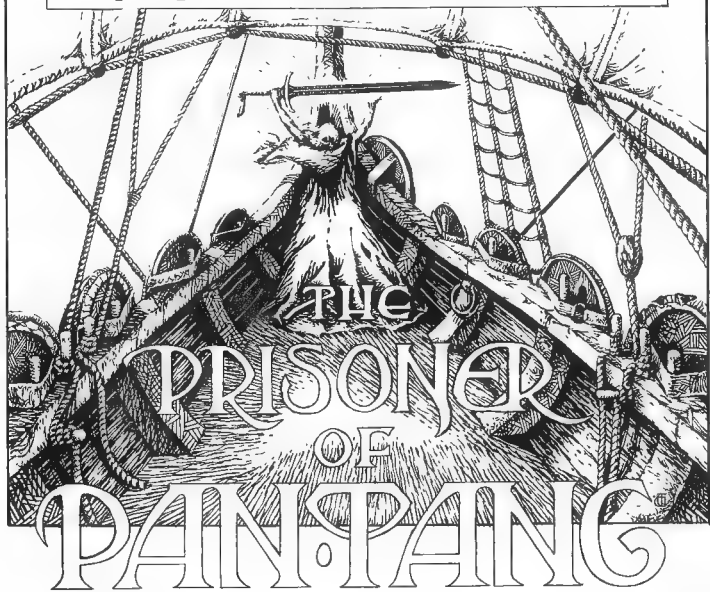
NEXT... **ARTEMIS and APOLLO**

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MICHAEL MOORCOCK'S ~

ELRIC

OF MELNIBONÉ



• SCRIPT: ERIC KIMBALL-ART: BOB GOULD •

FREELY ADAPTED FROM AN ORIGINAL STORY IDEA BY STEVEN GRANT

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SOFTLY ILLUMINATED BY THE LIGHT OF A PALE, MORNING SUN, A BLEAK, GREY SEA RISES AND FALLS AGAINST THE COAST OF PAN TANG...



... WHERE, AMIDST THE FLEEING SHADOWS OF THAT UNEASY DAWN, MEN MOVE STEALTHILY, WITH GRIM, SILENT PURPOSE.

THERE HAD BEEN, TWO DAYS BEFORE, A BATTLE FOUGHT OFF THAT COAST--A BATTLE IN WHICH MANY DIED, THEIR SCREAMS RINGING ACROSS THE WATER...



NOW, UNDER ORDERS OF THEIR RULER--THE THEOCRAT-- THESE HAVE COME TO SEARCH THE SHORE FOR SURVIVORS...

ONE OF WHOM, IT IS THOUGHT, IS A GREAT SORCERER...



"THAT MAY BE HE--THE RED-EYED ALBINO WHO SO INTERESTS OUR PRIESTS--"

"YOU ARE FOUR TO HIS ONE--TAKE HIM SWIFTLY! IT SHOULD PROVE SIMPLE ENOUGH..."



FOUR TO ONE--A SIMPLE MATTER. IT WOULD INDEED SEEM TO BE--

WERE THAT ONE ANY OTHER THAN THE FABLED "WHITE WOLF"...

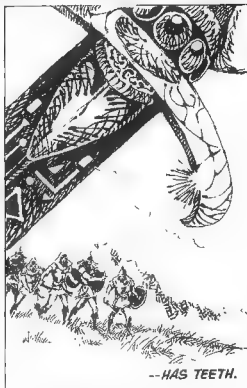
BUT OF THIS ONE, THE CAPTAIN HAS HEARD MANY CURIOUS TALES--

--SO HE WAITS...



WHILE HIS MEN RUSH CONFIDENTLY FORWARD--

--ONLY TO LEARN THAT, LIKE ALL WOLVES, THIS ONE--

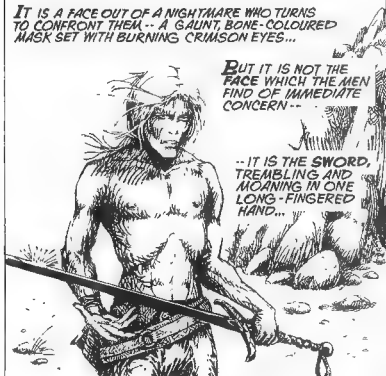


--HAS TEETH.

IT IS A FACE OUT OF A NIGHTMARE WHO TURNS TO CONFRONT THEM -- A GAUNT, BONE-COLOURED MASK SET WITH BURNING CRIMSON EYES...

BUT IT IS NOT THE FACE WHICH THE MEN FIND OF IMMEDIATE CONCERN--

--IT IS THE SWORD, TREMBLING AND MOANING IN ONE LONG-FINGERED HAND...



"KNOW, MEN OF PAN TANG, THAT I AM ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ-- AND THAT I BEAR THE RUNESWORD STORMBRINGER..."

"I AM WEARY OF BLOOD-LETTING, AND DO NOT WANT YOUR LIVES--

--BUT IF YOU INSIST ON COMING AT ME--



"--YOU WILL ALL--



"--SURELY--



"--DIE!"



--BUT A NET--



--WOVEN BY THE ISLAND'S WIZARD-PRIESTS...



ESPECIALLY WOVEN-- IT WOULD SEEM-- FOR THE CAPTURE OF WOLVES...



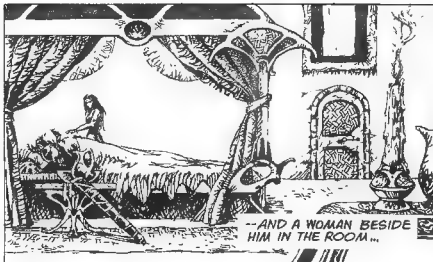
IT IS THEN THAT THE CAPTAIN ADVANCES-- HIS WEAPON IS NOT A SWORD--



--A NET OF SLEEP--

IT IS WITHIN PAN TANG'S CAPITAL THAT ELRIC FINALLY RE-AWAKES--

--TO FIND HIS RUNESWORD'S SHEATH EMPTY--



--AND A WOMAN BESIDE HIM IN THE ROOM--

WHO ARE YOU, WOMAN? WHAT IS THIS PLACE, AND WHAT HAS BECOME OF MY SWORD?"



"DO NOT BE TROUBLED, WHITEONE-- I AM BUT A SERVANT OF THE THEOCRAT--



--SENT TO WATCH OVER HIS--GUEST.

"YOUR SWORD ALSO, IS IN HIS--SAFEKEEPING..."



THEOCRAT--THE NAME MEANS NOTHING--

--AND AGAIN, ELRIC SLEEPS... HALF-DEAD, TORTURED BY NIGHTMARES--

--UNTIL--



PRINCE ELRIC!

"THE THEOCRAT REQUESTS THAT YOU MAKE YOURSELF READY FOR A BANQUET GIVEN IN HONOR OF YOUR ARRIVAL!"



"DAMN YOUR THEOCRAT! I HAVE NO NEED OR DESIRE OF HIS HONOR!"

RETURN THE SWORD THAT WAS TAKEN FROM ME!"



"LORD, I KNOW NOTHING OF YOUR SWORD--

"MY INSTRUCTIONS WERE BUT TO SUMMON YOU TO THE GREAT HALL--

--AND OFFER YOU PROPER RAINMENT--

"NOTHING MORE."



"NOTHING MORE? THEN YOU ARE NOT SENT TO ALSO DRESS THE HONORED PRINCE?"

NO, MY LORD--I--

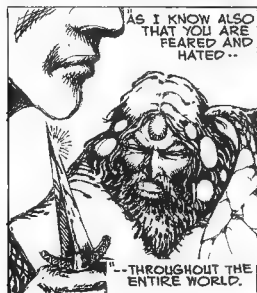
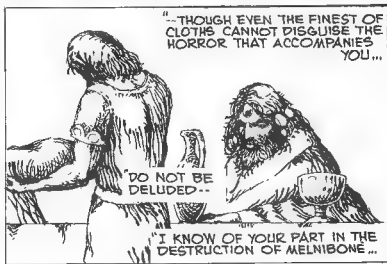
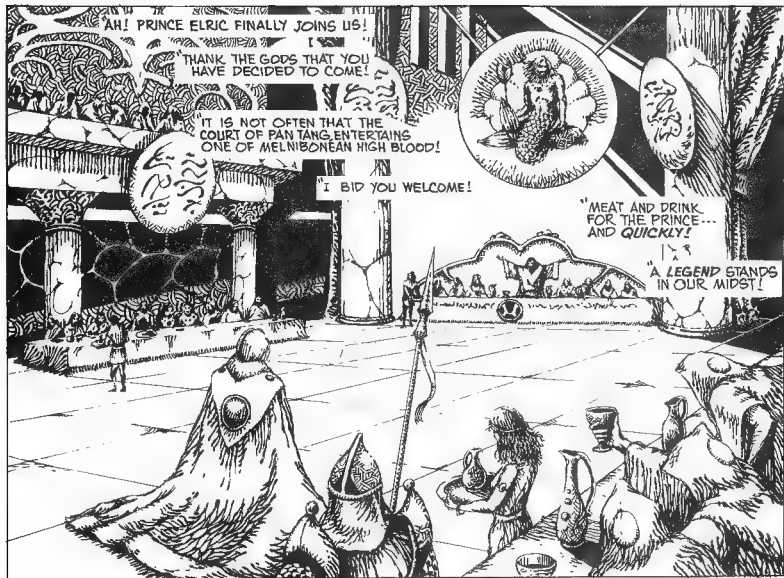
I WILL AWAIT WITHOUT TO ACCOMPANY YOU TO THE HALL..."



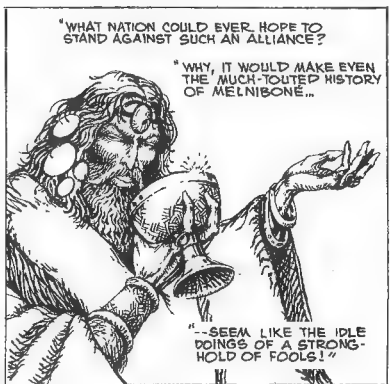
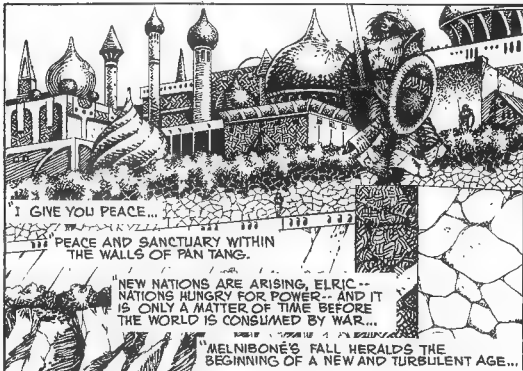
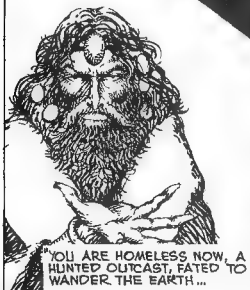
THE SERVANT DEPARTING, ELRIC HASTILY SELECTS FROM THE PROFFERED APPAREL--

KNOWING THAT, NO MATTER WHICH GARMENTS HE MAY CHOOSE--

--THEY ARE STILL BUT THOSE OF A PRISONER--



"WE ARE TOO MUCH ALIKE, YOU AND I-- WITH SO MUCH TO OFFER ONE ANOTHER..."



"I HAVE HEARD ENOUGH!

"YOU WISH TO BARGAIN?
YOU WISH TO FORM AN
ALLIANCE?"



"DOES ONE ALLY HIMSELF WITH
VERMIN? OR BARGAIN WITH
FILTH IN THE STREET?"



"I WILL BE
NO MAN'S
PAWN!"



"NOR WILL I EVER AID
IN A PETTY TYRANT'S
DREAMS OF GLORY--"



"YOU WILL DO,
ELRIC--"

--AS I BID YOU--



--WHETHER IT IS
AGAINST YOUR WILL--
OR NOT.

"STILL, IT IS A PITY
THAT WE COULD
NOT HAVE ARRIVED AT
A MORE PEACEFUL
AGREEMENT..."



"A VERY GREAT
PITY, INDEED..."

"KILL ME NOW--
WHILE YOU CAN--"

--FOR IF YOU
DO NOT--



--I SWEAR THAT I
WILL MURDER YOU."

"A BITTER
SPEECH!"



"BUT LET US SEE
IF A STAY IN
THE DUNGEON--"

--CANNOT REMOVE
SOME OF THE HARS-
NESS FROM HIS TONGUE..."

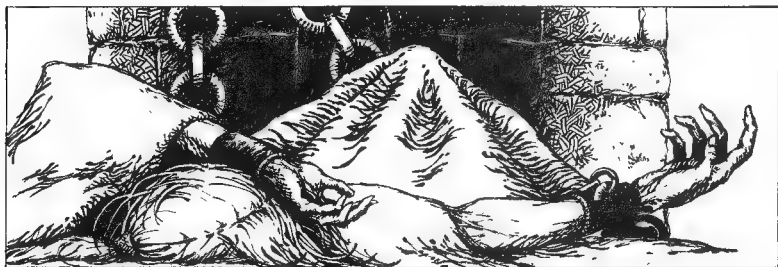


TOO WEAK TO RESIST, HIS VISION CLOUDING,
AND HIS BODY NUMB WITH PAIN, ELRIC
IS LED STAGGERING DOWN
A CORRIDOR WINDING
DEEP BELOW THE
PALACE...



HIS LEGS BUCKLING BENEATH HIM, HE FALLS,
UNABLE TO RISE-- AND IS BEATEN AND DRAGGED
INTO AN UNLIT CHAMBER BY THE TWO CURSING
GUARDS--

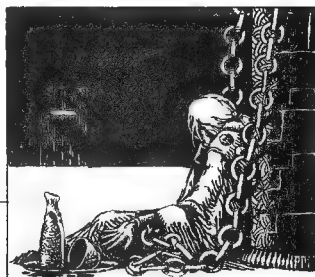
--WHERE, FOR A FLEETING MOMENT, HE FEELS
THE COLD BITE OF IRON-- AS HIS ARMS ARE
RAISED AND HIS WRISTS ARE BOUND ABOUT
WITH HEAVY CHAINS--



-- THEN -- HIS SENSES DESERTING HIM --
IS AWARE OF NOTHING MORE.

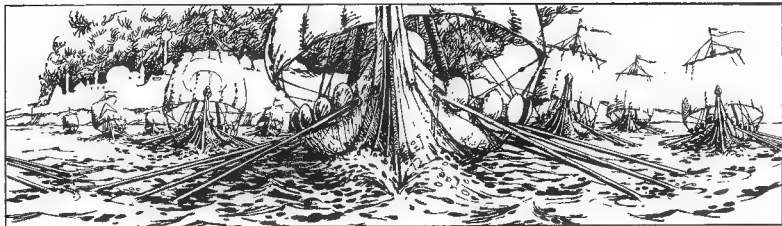


--DRUGS--
TO MAINTAIN
HIS
SURVIVAL--



THE DAYS PASS-- DAYS IN WHICH ELRIC
GROWS STEADILY MORE WEAK...
FINALLY, FOOD IS BROUGHT, AND WITH IT--

--FOOD THAT MUST BE FORCED BETWEEN
THE ALBINO'S LIPS-- FOR HE DOES NOT
STIR, HIS MIND IMMERSED IN DEEPENING
SHADOW-- AND QUICKENING DREAMS...



IN A SWIRLING CONFUSION OF GLISTENING IMAGES, ELRIC SEES ONCE AGAIN THE MASSES FLEET OF THE RAIDING SEA LORDS-- NEARLY HALF A THOUSAND SHIPS--

--SHIPS SAILING TO RAVAGE AND PLUNDER THE OLDEST CITY IN THE WORLD-- THE BEAUTIFUL IMRRYR, CAPITAL OF THE ISLAND KINGDOM OF MELNIBONE...



--AND AGAIN, HIS BELOVED CYMORIL--



--CYMORIL-- DEAD BY HIS OWN HAND--



HE SEES AGAIN THE CITY'S DESTRUCTION-- HIMSELF COMMANDING THE REAVER FLEET--

--AND, AT LAST, SEES THE FINAL, ABSURD DEATHS OF THOSE HE HAD LED-- SLAIN IN BATTLE OFF THE COAST OF PAN TANG...



AND HE SCREAMS-- AND SCREAMING, WAKES--



--TO FIND-- THAT HE IS NOT ALONE...





**NEARLY BLIND, ELRIC CLUTCHES
AT KUMA FOR SUPPORT--**

**--AND IS HALF-DRAWN
AND HALF-CARRIED ALONG
A STAIRWAY THAT LEADS--**

**--UP OUT OF
THE DARKNESS--**

**--AND INTO
A GARDEN--**

--OF SCREAMING STATUES--

**--A PLACE FILLED WITH THE
TORMENTED CRIES OF MEN
AND WOMEN TURNED TO STONE
BY PAST LORDS OF PAN TANG...**

LORDS--

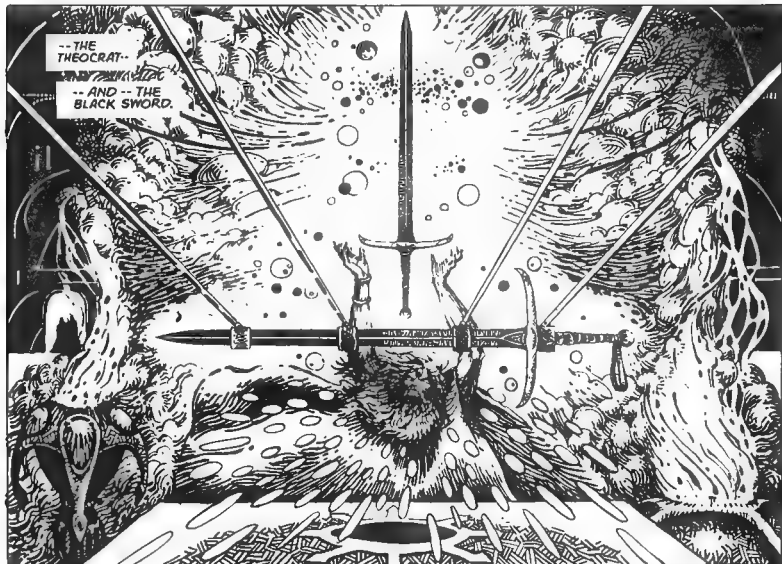
**--OF WHOM NOTHING
REMAINS BUT BONES--**

**--MINGLED TOGETHER
AND SUSPENDED IN A
HUGE BRONZE SHRINE.**

**--AND AGAIN DESCEND
INTO THE DARKNESS--**

**THEY
HURRY ON--**

--TO DISCOVER--



--THE
THEOCRAT--

--AND--THE
BLACK SWORD.



ELRIC --WHAT--?

"IT IS -- STORMBRINGER--

'STORMBRINGER! AND--ANOTHER--'



SHRIEKING MANIACALLY, THE THEOCRAT
SEIZES THE HILT OF THE UPRIGHT BLADE--

-- AND SLASHES THE BONDS
SUPPORTING STORMBRINGER--



--BEFORE WHIRLING
ABOUT--

--TO CONFRONT
THE INTRUDERS--



"ELRIC! I WELCOME YOU ONCE AGAIN!

"WELCOME TO YOU, TOO,
MY LADY KUMA--



"--LOVELIEST OF
TRAITORS..."



"AS YOU CAN SEE, I AM
NOT ENTIRELY WITHOUT
KNOWLEDGE OF THE
SORCEROUS ARTS--"

"ELRIC--

"PLEASE!"



"--AND ALTHOUGH YOUR
DAMNED SWORD REFUSES
TO SERVE ME--

"--STILL I WAS ABLE TO
HARNESS ITS' POWER--

"--TO SUMMON ITS
SISTER TO DO MY
BIDDING--



"AYE-- IT IS MOURNBLADE
THAT I BEAR--

"PLEASE, ELRIC!

"PLEASE!"



"THUS, IT SEEMS THAT
I NO LONGER HAVE
ANY NEED OF YOU,
FRIEND ELRIC--

"NOR, MY LADY--
OF YOU..."



"SO COME,
KUMA--

"COME TO YOUR
HUSBAND--

"--ONE LAST
TIME.



"HAS HE TOLD YOU
OF THESE SWORDS,
LITTLE ONE?"

"PLEASE--"

"HAS HE TOLD YOU
THAT THEY ARE
NOT ONLY ALIVE--"

"--BUT THAT
THEY FEED--"



"--AND FEED UPON
HUMAN SOULS?"

"PLEASE!"

"I BEG YOU--"



"I HAVE BROUGHT
HIM TO YOU!
I SWEAR IT!"

"I SWEAR IT!"



"THERE IS YOUR SAVIOR,
KUMAA! TELL TO HIM
YOUR SOFT LIES!"

"I WOULD NOT
BETRAY YOU!"



"HE FORCED ME
TO FREE HIM! I
SWEAR IT! HE--"

ELRIC
STRUGGLES
TO RISE--



--BUT
CAN DO--



--NOTHING--



"HER SOUL!"

"THE DAMNED BLADE--"



"--DOES NOT--"
"--GIVE ME--"
"--HER SOUL!"



"BUT IT MUST!"
"--I MUST HAVE IT!"

"I MUST!"



"I--"

"--THE BRAZIER!"



FELLING THE HUGE BRAZIER TOOK THE LAST OF ELRIC'S STRENGTH-- THERE IS NO MORE THOUGHT OF THE THEOCRAT--

THERE IS-- ONLY--



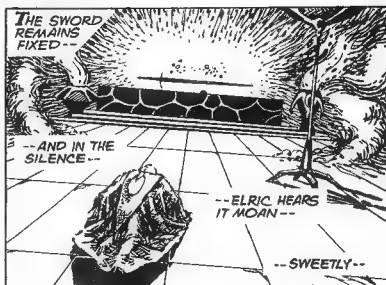
NEED.



"STORMBRINGER--"

"COME--"

"--TO ME--"

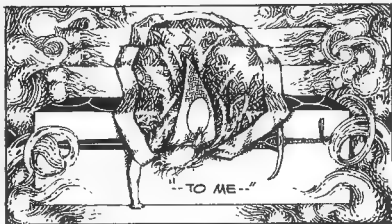
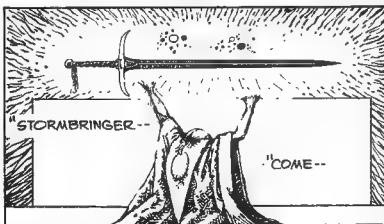
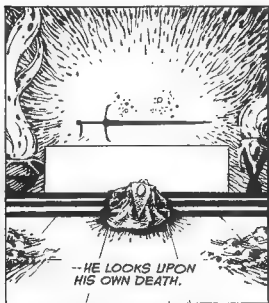


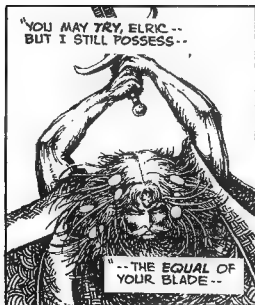
THE SWORD REMAINS FIXED--

--AND IN THE SILENCE--

--ELRIC HEARS IT MOAN--

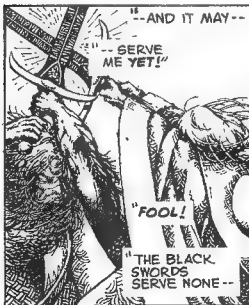
--SWEETLY--





"YOU MAY TRY, ELRIC --
BUT I STILL POSSESS --

"-- THE EQUAL OF
YOUR BLADE --



"-- AND IT MAY --

"-- SERVE
ME YET! --

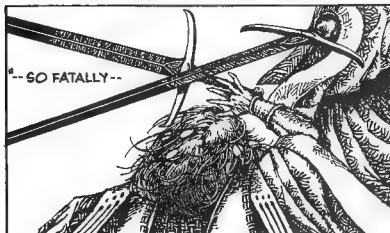
"FOOL!

"THE BLACK
SWORDS
SERVE NONE --



"-- BUT THOSE OF
MELNIBONE! --

"THOSE
THAT YOU --



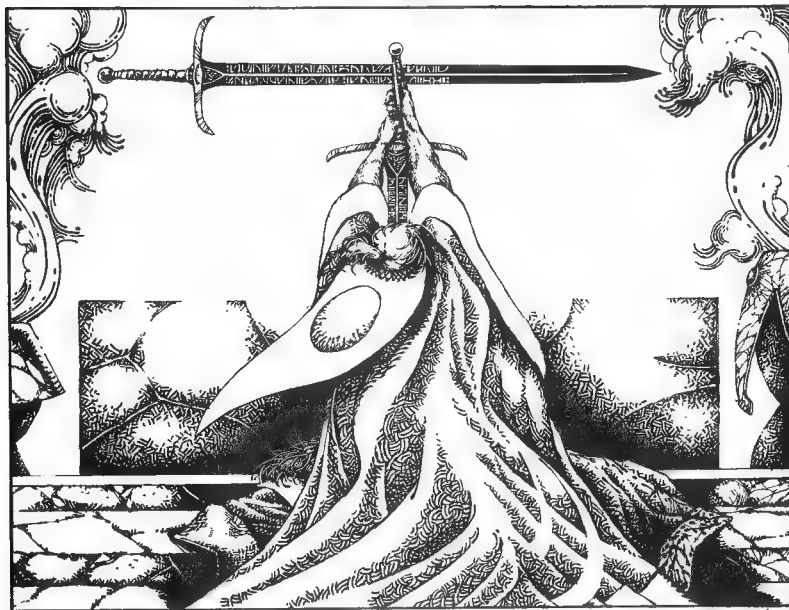
"-- SO FATALLY --

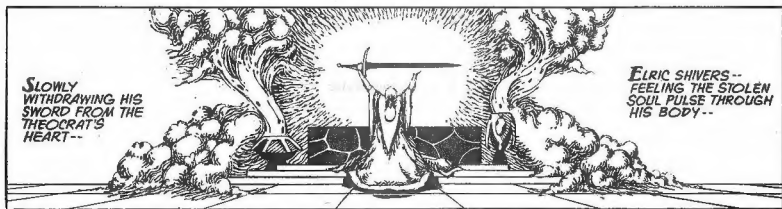


"-- MOCKED. --

"PLEASE -- MY --

"-- SOUL --





SLOWLY
WITHDRAWING HIS
SWORD FROM THE
THEOCRAT'S
HEART--

ELRIC SHIVERS--
FEELING THE STOLEN
SOUL PULSE THROUGH
HIS BODY--



--THEN TURNS, SEEKING
MOURNBLADE--

--AND, FINDING
IT GONE--



--CROSSES THE HALL,
TO WHERE LIES--

...KUMA...



--AND, FOR
A MOMENT--

--BITTERLY
WEEPS.



"THERE
HE IS!

"I HAVE FOUND
THE PRISONER!"



"AND YOU HAVE
ALSO FOUND
DEATH!



"FOR I WILL
KILL YOU ALL!



"ALL--



"-- BUT YOU.

"YOU WILL
REMAIN ALIVE."

STUNNED BY WHAT HE HAS
JUST WITNESSED, THE
TERRIFIED GUARD LEADS
ELRIC WHERE HE DESIRES..



--WONDERING--



--IF HE
LEADS--

--DEMON--



--OR MAN.



"DO NOT TREMBLE SO--
I HAVE TOLD YOU THAT
YOU WOULD LIVE--
AND YOU SHALL--



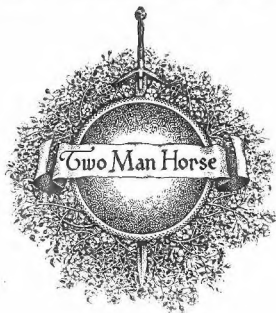
"--FOR THERE IS
A MESSAGE YOU
MUST BEAR FOR
ME. TELL YOUR DEAD
RULER'S SON--

"--TELL HIM--

"-- THAT I WILL
REMEMBER THIS...



"...AND THAT-- ONE
DAY-- I WILL RETURN."



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